

**THE GAMBIA**

**RESULTS REVIEW**

**NON-PRESENCE COUNTRY**

**R4**

**FY 2001**

**March 1999**

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## **THE GAMBIA**

### **A. Contribution to Food Security**

The overall goal of the FFP Program in The Gambia is to help contribute in ensuring food security in the country. This is done to complement government efforts through working with grassroots associations to promote food production, to provide income generation, and to encourage improved health and nutrition practices. Specifically, the program focusses on sesame production since this crop is found to be low input and drought tolerant. Originally introduced as a women's food crop, sesame has been grown primarily on community plots by women farmers in kafos (traditional groups). Nowadays individuals as well are cultivating sesame for both income and consumption purposes. FFP program resources contribute to food security from three perspectives: Access, availability and utilization. The program focuses on these three aspects through working with Sesame Growers Associations (SGAs) and Nutrition Centers in the health program. The agriculture and small enterprise development components of the program continue to focus on alleviating the causes of poverty (unavailability of and lack of access to food) through projects that improve agricultural production and/or rural incomes.

The goal of the FFP program is to empower the women primary producers to become sustainable in their food production endeavors. This is why the program concentrates on women and on sesame as a food and cash crop in the agricultural component. The Health and Nutrition Institutional Strengthening (HNIS) component aims to decrease infant, child and maternal mortality through targeted health education, improved utilization of food resources and other complementary activities.

Sesame contributes to the Gambian economy and food security from the household to the national level. At the household level, the seed can be used whole in local recipes, processed into oil for consumption or local sale or, sold whole for export. Value added processing of sesame has been especially important for the SGA women farmers, and contributes to the socio-economic well being of sesame producing families. Not only does local processing increase household access to oil to fulfil dietary needs, but savings are also made in not having to purchase the imported cooking oil. Furthermore, income is earned from the sale of surplus oil and the residual sesame cake. This cake is used for both human and animal consumption as well as fertilizer and soap for washing clothes. The residual cake is also sold to generate additional income which is subsequently used to purchase other food items for family use.

At the national level, the production of high quality confectionery (white) seeds has great potential to generate foreign exchange earnings through export. This year sesame has really proven to be a reliable source of income earner for the women farmers. Peanuts considered a single cash crop did not do well in terms of marketing and sesame was found to be a good substitute this year. However this is not to say that the program tries to promote sesame as an alternative to peanut since traditionally, peanut is the main cash crop in the country and may likely stay that way in the foreseeable future. The peanut markets were unnecessarily restricted this year and therefore men farmers had to depend very much on the income generated from the sesame fields to buy food for the family.

### **B. Effectiveness of the Program in Achieving Results**

CRS's current Development Activity Proposal (DAP) was approved in the second quarter of FY 98 (February 1998) and will cover a period of three years through to FY 01 (March 2001).

Most of the activities in FY 98 were devoted to collecting baseline data for the impact indicators relating to the specific results to be achieved.

Because this is the first fiscal year of the three-year DAP, key programmatic issues imperative to the success of this project, such as the management information system (MIS), baseline surveys, and the establishment of the apex organization, the National Association of Women Farmers (NAWFA) for the Sesame Growers' Associations (SGAs) were implemented.

The anthropometric baseline survey for the Child Survival(CS) project, the SGA agricultural baseline survey, and the development of a comprehensive procedures manual for the MIS have helped improve benchmarks set for the program and strengthen the ongoing monitoring of project activities. While the SGA project focussed its energies on the establishment of NAWFA, The Gambia Food and Nutrition Association (GAFNA) concentrated on transforming the Child Survival (CS) project from a center-based to a more community-based program. (It should be noted that GAFNA has reached a certain level of maturity in that they have been able to leverage funding with the help of CRS, which will cover the next five years for their health and nutrition program. GAFNA will introduce a program that CRS piloted for the local production of maternal food supplements called FUTUKANYA. This program will be funded by the World Bank.) These activities will ensure a smooth transition to phase-out and eventual self-sustainability of both projects. CRS plans to phase into new program areas which will help to sustain the gains made in the current program and focus on programs which have longer term benefits.

(For detailed information on the above, please refer to the FY 98 Results Report from CRS).